



Tomorrow's Child is dedicated to preserving infant lives and providing hope and healing for families. We are thrilled to be here today in support of the Safe Sleep Act.

Tomorrow's Child has a two-fold mission: preventing infant deaths and supporting those who are affected by it. Tomorrow's Child originally began as a grassroots effort by families coming together with one unfortunate common interest, the death of an infant. Almost 20 years later, Tomorrow's Child continues to provide services and programs throughout the state to save babies lives and support families who have experienced a pregnancy loss or infant death.

Tomorrow's Child, along with our partners, work tirelessly each day to promote safe sleep practices for babies to help reduce Michigan's infant mortality rate. In fact, Tomorrow's Child touches the life of every newborn in Michigan, primarily through our infant safe sleep programs. If you or someone you know has delivered a baby in Michigan, chances are that you have benefited from the efforts of Tomorrow's Child.

We fully support this legislation, as a large part of our work is with hospitals and health care providers, giving them the tools and the message to offer to parents and caregivers about safe sleep practices. Over the past twenty years, we have worked very closely with the major healthcare systems in the state to develop a system wide approach to address infant safe sleep. We train health care professionals using the gold standards developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). We also work together to assist with educational efforts including: sample safe sleep policies, protocols and guidelines to ensure hospital policies are current, teaching curriculum for new hires, teaching tools and messaging guidelines for parents and a check list for patient discharge.

By focusing our efforts on eliminating the unsafe sleep deaths, we can put a real dent in Michigan's infant mortality rate – currently 37 among all 50 states – bringing it below the national average. We must continue to collaborate with one another to coordinate our educational efforts and increase awareness surrounding infant safe sleep. In 2013, over 130 Michigan infants died due to compromised sleep environments – this includes suffocation, strangulation or entrapment. As a long time maternal and child health advocate and, most importantly, a mother, I find the loss of these babies to unsafe sleep environments to be a tragedy, particularly since such deaths are 100 percent preventable.

While the causes of infant mortality are many and complex, we may be able to put a real dent in our infant mortality rate by encouraging infant safe sleep practices. This legislation may not solve our problems as they relate to infant mortality, they certainly are a step in the right direction. Together we can provide parents with the knowledge and tools they need to keep their babies healthy. Together we can make Michigan a national leader in eliminating preventable infant deaths. And together we can turn Michigan around and make it a place for infants to not only survive but thrive.

Seven infant safe sleep facts parents and caregivers should know to keep their babies safe while sleeping:

1. Baby sleeps by him or herself in a crib, portable crib, or bassinet.
2. Always put baby to sleep on his or her back even when he can roll over.
3. Nothing in the sleep area. No pillows, blankets, comforters, stuffed animals, or other soft things.
4. Keep baby's face uncovered during sleep for easy breathing. Use a sleeper instead of a blanket.
5. Don't allow anyone to smoke anything around baby.
6. Don't overheat the baby. Dress the baby in as much or as little clothing as you are wearing.
7. Use a firm mattress with a tightly fitted sheet.